

Elders' Toolbox

Responsibilities of Ruling Elders

The session is responsible for “establishing good order and providing pastoral care of the congregation.”

~ The Book of Forms, Section 109

Leadership

- To know the Scriptures and basic Christian doctrine.
- To determine the direction, vision and goals of your congregation.
- To know church polity (responsibilities of sessions, the presbyteries and synods) (114).

Pastoral Care

- To oversee the spiritual welfare of the congregation (110).
- To ensure that candidates for new church membership are properly instructed in the Christian faith (110.1).
- To communicate the Christian faith in a variety of ways, including pastoral care (110), evangelism (113.3), mission (112.2) and Christian education (112.1) programs, as well as baptismal instruction (112.5).
- To be “an example to the believers in speech, conduct, love, faith and purity” (106) –1 Tim. 4:12.

Oversight

- To regulate the hours and forms of public worship and arrange for special services and provide for the administration of the sacraments (111). By the way, the minister, as an executive of the presbytery, is responsible for the conduct and content of public worship and pulpit supply (111).
- To be responsible for all policy and procedures concerning the use of the church buildings and property (109.2).
- To be accountable to the courts of the church for the supervision of the life of the congregation, including the election of elders (132), maintaining “the roll” (109.5) and appointment of the organist (111.2).
- To be responsible for stewardship and mission, “both spiritual and material” (113).
- To develop and maintain programs of mission and outreach, “to the immediate community and beyond” (113.2).
- To work closely with the board of managers, if there is one (162). Session is responsible for all matters relating to stewardship (113.6).
- To oversee all groups meeting under the auspices of the congregation (109.1).
- To critically select and review Sunday school curriculum, Bible study guides and other materials for church programs.
- To be responsible for all teachers and leaders in the congregation (112.1) (except diaconal ministers whose work is overseen by Presbytery).

Note: Bracketed references refer to article numbers in *The Book of Forms*.

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